(d) About eight exploratory proposals have been received for division of telecom services in different part of the country.

Privatisation of telephones in the country

404. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplaing privatisation of telephones in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether the telephones would be available on demand to public in the country; and

(d) whether Government contemplate to install public call office within every five kms. on the National and the State highway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) By the end of the 8th Five Year Plan, the waiting period for telephoses in large systems will be brought down to 2 years with telephones available practically *on demand* in the tribal and rural areas. Efforts will be made to progressively reduce the waiting period such that telephones are available on demand by the turn of the century.

(d) No, Sir.

Formation of Joint Venture by Telecom. New Zealand (TNZ)

405. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Telecom. New Zealand (TNZ) has formed a joint venture with Bharati Telecom. Punjab State Electronics Development and Production Corporation and U.S. based NRI;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the joint venture has planned to invest Rs. 50 crore on this project and also to set up Rs. 100 crore captive network for the State Government; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No such proposal has been received by the Government.

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of the reply to part (a).

कुल्लू जिले के एक गांव में उप डाकघर का खोला जाना

406. **श्री महेश्वर सिंह** : क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने गांव बारी ग्राम पंचायत में ऊगी, जिला कुल्लू में शाखा डाकघर खोलने की स्वीकृति प्रदान की थी ;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि पंचायत की अनुशंसा पर ए०पी०ओ० महोदय ने शाखा डाकखघर खोलने के लिये गांव बारी, ग्राम पंचायत से ऊगी, जिला कुल्लू में 15 नवम्बर को निर्धारित स्थान का दौरा किया था ;

(ग) क्या यह भी सच है कि वहां पर तैनात करने के लिये कर्मचारियों का चयन भी कर लिया गया था और उन्हें नियुक्ति पत्र भी दे दिए गए थे ; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो उप शाखा डाकघर खोलने और कर्मचारियों की नियुक्ति को रोकने के क्या कारण हैं ; और किस प्राधिकारी ने ऐसे आदेश जारी किए ?